

**Planning Commissioner Comments from the July 10, 2012 meeting.
Southpoint Trails – A1100005**

Ms. Beechwood -- I voted to deny this plan amendment and zoning change.

The applicant did not make the case that an increase in density from 4 du/ac to 6 du/ac was necessary for the development to succeed or overall beneficial for Durham. The fact that the applicant managed to appease the neighbors was beside the point. What is of consequence is getting the Comprehensive Plan right and achieving a consensus for the future of the 751 corridor.

Much attention was paid the 751 corridor during the period when Southpoint was being developed and approved. At that time the comprehensive plan was amended to fine-tune the zoning in this area to serve the disparate needs of our community. But that was a decade ago, and much has changed in the interim. Currently, discussions of the future of this strip of land are as polarizing as they are passionate. Durham needs a 751 Corridor Planning effort.

Significant amounts of cash, time and energy have been thrown at our NC54 Corridor Plan. While not perfect, we have come away from the effort with a vastly better understanding of the corridor, our place in the region, how to negotiate successfully with our neighboring stakeholders, regional and rapid transit, and transit-based development. Stakeholders at every level have a much better understanding of how it all works. And this is exactly the same effort that is needed in the 751 corridor.

The Southpoint Trails case illustrates perfectly what we will be forced to repeat for years to come if we don't get some kind of consensus on our vision for the 751 corridor. It is not the job of the Planning Commission to tweak the zoning of each parcel, one-by-one, all the way down to the Chatham county line. Although undoubtedly less expensive, I don't think we'd be happy with the final outcome.

Ms. Board – Any increase in density at the outer fringes of Durham are not consistent with the long term plans to manage growth in Durham by increasing density downtown at along major traffic corridors that support the growth mass transit.

Mr. Davis – I voted approval based on the demand for residential use.

Mr. Gibbs – Approve.

Mr. Harris – Voted against motion to approve.

Mr. Kimball- I voted to approve because of the following reasons, 1) Site is graded naturally to reduce changes natural runoff. 2) Applicant reduced impervious surface from 70% to 48%. 3) Traffic would be within roadway capacity if 751 assemblage projects is removed from capacity planning as it (751 assemblage) must be reviewed before it can move forward. 4) Adds much needed inventory to create a balanced housing need in the area. 5) Watershed is protected with large tree save and

current ordinance requirements. 6) Neighbors support project with agreement from developers for fencing.

Ms. Mitchell-Allen – I voted to approve.

Mr. Smudski – Requestor would have been better off with a better plan, but we would need a change in plan or law to require consideration.

Ms. Winders – I concur with the staff recommendation to stay with the Future Land Use Plan. Benefits to the community created by additional units are not clear. Applicant hints that units will be less expensive, but makes no commitment to provide affordable units. Would this case be a good opportunity to use an affordable housing density bonus?

Mr. Whitley- This project needs more details. I vote to approve.